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CIA Director Helms addresses newspaper editors.

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Russians' 1962 Aid Confirmed by CIA

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In his first public speech as CIA director, Richard Helms yesterday declared that "a number of well-placed and courageous Russians" helped the United States in identification of Soviet weapons in Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis.

He mentioned no names, but the reference clearly appeared to be to Col. Oleg Penkovsky, the Soviet intelligence officer who brought much information out during visits to London in the 16 months prior to the missile crisis. He was arrested that October and subsequently executed for treason.

"The Penkovsky Papers," published as a book in 1953, were widely believed to be based on CIA interrogations, and the claim was made in the introduction that Penkovsky's information was invaluable during the Cuba crisis. Talking to newsmen after the speech, Helms acknowledged that the Russians he mentioned included Penkovsky.

However, not until Helms' speech yesterday at a luncheon of the American Society of Newspaper Editors had an American official in a position to know come so close to crediting Penkovsky openly.

Helms detailed the kind of work the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies did at the time, trying to separate fact from fiction about what Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev was doing in Cuba. He then included this paragraph:

"Our intelligence files in Washington, however—thanks to U-2 photography of the Soviet Union and to a number of well-placed and courageous Russians who helped us—included a wealth of information on Soviet missile systems. We had descriptions or photographs of the missiles, their transporters and other associated equipment, and characteristic sites in the Soviet Union."

This enabled specialists, with the help of pictures taken over Cuba to "fill in the details of the threat," Helms said.

Much of Helms' speech was a defense of the CIA against charges it is an "invisible government." He denied reports the CIA is "somehow involved in the world drug traffic." Without mentioning recent charges against the FBI, Helms said that "we do not target on American citizens."

The closest Helms came to discussing the CIA's role in current policy issues was his reference to the ongoing strategic arms limitation talks. He said it would be "unthinkable" to conclude a SALT agreement with the Soviet Union "without the means for monitoring compliance."

He mentioned checking on both offensive and defensive missile systems with a special reference to the possibility raised in the Pentagon that the Soviets might upgrade certain surface-to-air missile systems.

The United States "must have the means of detecting new developments which might convert one of the regular Soviet air defense missile systems into an ABM network," Helms said.

"We make no foreign policy," he said. "The nation must to a degree take it on faith that we too are honorable men devoted to her service. I can assure you that we are but I am precluded from demonstrating it to the public," he added.

Helms, who has been with CIA since its creation in 1947 and has been its director since mid-1966, declared that "we not only have no stake in policy debates" within the administration "but we cannot and must not take sides. The role of intelligence in policy formulation is limited to providing facts—the agreed facts—and the whole known range of facts—relevant to the problem under consideration."

The CIA under one of Helms' predecessors, Allen Dulles, was widely charged with advocacy in the Bay of Pigs debacle and in other covert activities. This was said to have been changed after a probe of the Bay of Pigs that set up the guidelines listed by Helms.